

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----031546Z 111133 /41  
Z 031523Z MAY 77 ZFF 4  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 2364

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 12924

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FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE  
DEPT PASS WHITE HOUSE

E.O.11652: XGDS-3  
TAGS: PFOR US VN  
SUBJ: US/VN RELATIONS: FIRST MEETING WITH VIETNAMESE

1. MEETING LASTED THREE AND ONE-HALF HOURS, AT  
VIETNAMESE EMBASSY. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS AND OUR  
INITIAL COMMENTS ON MEETING. FULL REPORT WILL FOLLOW.

2. AS PREVIOUSLY AGREED, HOLBROOKE OPENED WITH  
PREPARED REMARKS WHICH CONVEYED OUR PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH  
RELATIONS AND EXCHANGE EMBASSIES. PHAN HIEN THEN ASKED  
SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT FOCUSED ON OUR SINCERITY IN  
WANTING NORMAL RELATIONS AND WHETHER OR NOT WE WOULD  
PROVIDE AID. HE ALSO ASKED WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD  
IN MIND IN REGARD TO JOINT EXPLOITATION OF OIL RESOURCES  
IN AREA.

3. IN RESPONSE, HOLBROOKE ASSURED VIETNAMESE ON  
PRESIDENT'S SINCERITY RE NORMAL RELATIONS AND CITED  
CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER PROHIBITIONS ON AID. HE  
STRESSED PRESENT STATE OF US PUBLIC OPINION ON ISSUE  
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AND FACT THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN THINGS THAT THE  
PRESIDENT COULD NOT DO IN ANY CASE WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL  
APPROVAL. AT THIS POINT HE ALSO TOLD HIEN THAT WE WOULD  
NO LONGER OBJECT TO UN MEMBERSHIP FOR SRV, AND THAT  
TRADE EMBARGO WOULD BE LIFTED WHEN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS  
WERE ESTABLISHED AND EMBASSIES SET UP IN BOTH CAPITALS.

4. DURING TEA BREAK WHICH FOLLOWED, HIEN SAID THAT "WE MUST FIND IMAGINATIVE WAYS TO SOLVE PROBLEM OF AID." HIEN SUGGESTED THAT WE COULD MAKE SECRET AGREEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING ON AID AS PART OF OVERALL PACKAGE DEAL WHICH INCLUDED UN MEMBERSHIP, TRADE EMBARGO, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, AND MIA'S. HOLBROOKE REPLIED THAT "SECRET DEALS" ARE OUT OF THE QUESTION AND THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT NOT ONLY UNAVOIDABLE BUT DESIREABLE.

5. HIEN RETURNED TO THIS THEME AFTER TEA BREAK. HE ALSO NOTED THAT UN ISSUE WAS NOW RESOLVED, BUT ASKED WHY WE WERE WITHHOLDING LIFTING OF TRADE EMBARGO UNTIL AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF EMBASSIES. HE SUGGESTED THAT TRADE EMBARGO BE LIFTED IMMEDIATELY. HE SAID THAT SINCE WOODCOCK COMMISSION HAD VISITED HANOI, SRV HAD MADE ADDITIONAL EFFORTS TO MEET US CONCERN ON MIA ISSUE, AND THAT THE SRV WOULD NOW INCREASE THEIR EFFORTS FURTHER. (IN TEA BREAK CONVERSATIONS, FRANK SIEVERTS CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS ON THIS MATTER, WHICH WILL BE SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE TELEGRAM.) HIEN SAID THAT SRV COULD DO EVEN MORE, BUT THIS WAS RELATED TO OUR EFFORTS ON AID. HE SAID HIS COUNTRY WANTED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, BUT THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE AMERICAN FLAG TO FLY IN HANOI OVER AN EMBASSY UNTIL WE HAD GIVEN SOME AID TO VIETNAM. HE DID NOT AT THIS SESSION REFER TO AN AID OBLIGATION OR TO REPARATIONS OR TO THE PARIS ACCORDS, OR TO ANY SPECIFIC AMOUNTS BUT HE REPEATEDLY RETURNED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE TO HIS COUNTRY.

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HOLBROOKE STRESSED AGAIN THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WISHED TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND US AND MOVE FORWARD, AND THAT THIS COULD BEST BE DONE BY A FEW SIMPLE STEPS THAT COULD BE TAKEN NOW.

6. HIEN NEVER DIRECTLY ACCEPTED OR REJECTED ANY OF OUR PROPOSALS. HE SUGGESTED MEETING TOMORROW FOR HIS MORE CONSIDERED STATEMENT (HE CHARACTERIZED HIS COMMENTS TODAY AS "PRELIMINARY"). IT SEEMS UNLIKELY

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 2365

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THAT HE WILL HAVE NEW INSTRUCTIONS BY TOMORROW,  
ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE. IF HE DOES NOT, THEN WE  
PROPOSE TO PROCEED AS FOLLOWS ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT  
ISSUES:

A. TRADE EMBARGO. WE SEE NO NEED TO INDICATE  
WE WILL LIFT THE EMBARGO IMMEDIATELY. OUR PRESENT  
POSITION GIVES US SOME LEVERAGE AND IS A REASONABLE ONE.  
TRADE AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SHOULD GO TOGETHER.

B. AID. ON QUESTION OF AID, WE SAID TODAY THAT  
WHILE WE UNDERSTAND THEIR DESIRE FOR RECONSTRUCTION AID  
AND THEIR VIEW OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING IT, A  
LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICANS AND MEMBERS OF  
CONGRESS DO NOT SHARE THIS VIEW WHICH IS BASED ON PAST  
HISTORY. THEIR VIEW IS, RATHER, REFLECTED CLEARLY IN  
CURRENT LEGISLATIVE PROHIBITIONS ON AID, AND THE  
PRESIDENT'S POSITION IS ALSO CLEAR. HOLBROOKE ADDED,  
"PRESIDENT HAS INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO LOOK TO FUTURE  
RE RELATIONSHIPS WITH VIETNAM, INCLUDING ECONOMIC  
RELATIONSHIPS, AND WE BELIEVE FOCUSsing ON MUTUAL  
EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION WILL BE BENEFICIAL FOR BOTH  
SIDES." WE NOTED PRIVATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE  
AS WELL AS US CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANIZATIONS AIDING VIETNAM. WE NOTED THAT PRESIDENT  
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CARTER HAS INSTRUCTED USG TO INTERPOSE NO FURTHER  
OBJECTIONS TO SUCH MULTI-LATERAL AID. WE NOTED THAT  
"AS RELATIONS DEVELOP, THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY  
THAT CHANGING ATTITUDES WILL LEAD TO CHANGES IN  
PRESENT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY RESTRICTIONS SO AS TO  
PERMIT MODEST AMOUNTS OF OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE,  
IN KEEPING WITH US HUMANITARIAN TRADITIONS." IT SEEMS

CLEAR THAT HIEN IS ASKING FOR SOME SORT OF COMMITMENT (IN PRIVATE IF THAT IS THE BEST HE CAN GET) THAT WE WOULD GO TO CONGRESS FOR SOME AS YET UNDEFINED AMOUNT OF AID. UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED, WE WILL SIMPLY REPEAT TOMORROW, IN AS FORCEFUL A WAY AS POSSIBLE, WHAT WE SAID TODAY.

C. ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THIS IS A TRICKY TACTICAL QUESTION. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT HIEN WILL ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL TOMORROW, BUT HE WILL CERTAINLY NOT REJECT IT. IF HE DOES NOT AGREE, WE PROPOSE THAT WE LEAVE OUR OFFER ON THE TABLE, AND INDICATE THAT WE ARE READY TO RETURN TO PARIS WHENEVER HIS GOVERNMENT WISHES TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS LEADING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. IF HE OFFERS TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITHOUT AGREEING ON EMBASSIES, WE WILL INDICATE THAT IT HAS BEEN CONSISTENT US PRACTICE THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS INCLUDES EARLY EXCHANGE OF EMBASSIES.

D. PUBLIC STATEMENTS. WE RECOMMEND THAT WE EXPLAIN TO THE VIETNAMESE THAT WE MUST MAKE PUBLIC THE GENERAL NATURE OF OUR POSITION, WHILE AVOIDING DETAILS. WE SHOULD MAKE PUBLIC FACT THAT WE HAVE REMOVED US VETO OF SRV MEMBERSHIP IN UN. WE MUST BE PREPARED IF WE FOLLOW THIS COURSE TO STATE PUBLICLY THAT WE ARE SATISFIED THAT PROCEDURES NOW IN TRAIN WILL LEAD TO RESOLUTION OF MIA QUESTION. IN REGARD TO ALL OF FOREGOING, WE URGE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CONGRESSIONAL

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CONSULTATIONAM

9. WE AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS AS APPROPRIATE ON ABOVE.  
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## Message Attributes

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